

The name of the book, "The Alchemist" will surely set people thinking about strange people with weird names who sat in a laboratory all day long keeping watch over smelting metal and hoping to discover the Elixir of Life and the Philosopher's Stone. But this book is not about that, and it's not about black magic or any alchemy or any kind of strange treasure. You might think that the author Paul Coelho has written a comical fiction, but he's not, this book is about a boy and his adventure. A shepherd boy in Spain who set off on a journey to find his destiny after having repeatedly dreamt about a treasure buried near the Egyptian pyramids. On his way he met with a mysterious old king and even journeyed together with an alchemist. That boy, who believed in omens, is called Santiago.

The story began when this shepherd boy, Santiago, consulted an old gypsy woman about his repeating dreams of a treasure. That gypsy fortune-teller encouraged him to go to the pyramids to find his treasure and told him that it was his destiny to do so. Later, when he was still unsure whether or not to embark on the quest for treasure, he met a mysterious old king who repeated the same message to him. Then he made up his mind to go for it.

Unfortunately, Santiago met a scoundrel who cheated him out of his money and possessions shortly after he embarked on his quest. He nearly gave up on his dream but eventually he saved up enough money working for a merchant who sells crystal and resumed his journey. He joined a camel caravan which takes him across the wide desert to the Al Fayoum Oasis where his destiny awaits him.

Santiago learnt a lot from his travel-mates in the caravan. For example, a camel driver who taught Santiago just to live in the present and not to worry too much about the threat of war. The camel driver thinks that every moment is a party, a feast and a festival and he believes in the one true god and that everything is made by the same god. He told Santiago not to be afraid of losing what we have, even if it is our own lives or our possessions and property. He said that if everything is written by god's same hand then we should have no fear.

This book is filled with strange, funny and grasping stories and interesting people. It tells us that people often see only what they want to see and therefore usually what they think they see is not the truth. People often bury their heads and refuse to face the things they dread and never heed the omens. Even Santiago himself fell into the same trap in the story when he failed to take heed of a bar owner's warning and gave his money to a scoundrel who ran away with it.

This book teaches us that all things in life contrive to help you when you are trying to live out your destiny but you must still show your determination to follow your destiny in the face of obstacles in order to succeed. Therefore, we should do our best when luck is on our side but at the same time be prepared for the worst. It also teaches the principle of "beginner's luck" which explains why sometimes when we try something for the first time it was easy to succeed if we are following our destiny. That probably explains why I always won matches when I first played badminton. Regrettably, beginner's luck doesn't last and we give up on our dreams all too easily. Men are always afraid to lose what little they own and convinced themselves not to pursue their destiny in the face of danger or obstacles and they either back out or force their hearts to shut up.

The author tells us in the book that everyone and everything in the world has a destiny. Many people ignore their purpose in life and wasted their whole lives. There are also some people who only think about money and wealth and security in life without actually the will to live out their whole destiny. They are the ones who gave up their dreams all too easily whenever they face obstacles and difficulties in realizing their dreams. That is why the ones who succeed in finding their destiny are so few in number. The hero of our story, Santiago, was however, one of the few.

This book's purpose is not to teach the readers alchemy nor to tell people to go to a ruined church and dig for treasure under an old sycamore tree, but to teach life's important lessons. This book is thrilling and inspiring in many ways and I enjoy reading it as an adventure story. It's surely a good book and Coelho's story-telling is incredibly fascinating.

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